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SOLT'S RETURN

William Wells
Newell

With Celtic designs by
Marion L. Peabody



GENERAL

7111

The Prelude

In castle-chamber, Lady Adela
Her banner sewed, the victory of
Saint George
With silk of every hue, while at her
feet
Contemplative and idle mused Isolda,
A pale-complexioned niece, with
passionate eyes
Of inward exaltation. On the floor
Awkward and deft lounged Pierre
the jongleur,
Proved sleight-of-hand, maintained
six balls in air,
Broke jests, and now and then, for
change of mirth,
Chanted romances sweetly to the rote.

Quaint melodies, and quainter gar-
mented,
Brief coat, hose blue and russet leg
by leg,
Broad saffron hat by ribbon now
dependent,
Brown curls to left a-cluster, rightward
clipped;
Tall, spare, and odd, nose arching,
head a-droop,
Gray meditative orbs, where while
he sang,
Flickered and darted gay sarcastic
lights,
That died, as glimmer of a highland
pool

Its tarn abandoneth to wonted shade.
Satirical and free the lays he told,
How Reynard duped Sir Isengrim
the Wolf,
Aping a holy pilgrim; of the minstrel,
Who, demon-charged with boiling
of the damned,
Against Saint Peter diced with souls
for stake,
To forfeit all, at every separate throw
Less by one pip, till Satan, late at eve
From hunt returning, found his kettle
void,
And raging, cast the player forth from
Hell,
Where never since hath poet been
allowed;

With more as laughable, until I-
solda,
Impatient, tapped her foot and cried:
«Your mercy!
To farce adieu! Now hear we of my
namesake,
Isolt of Cornwall, she whom the
love-draught
Forever and forever bound to Tris-
tran.»
«Your pardon, lady fair,» returned the
singer,
Another way the old romance pro-
ceedeth;
Four summers, and no longer, wrought
the potion;

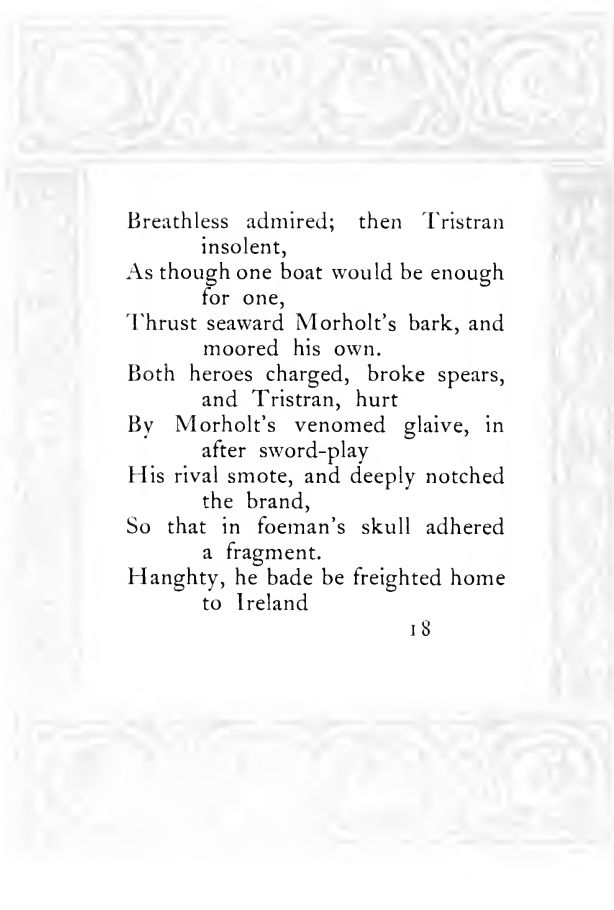
Its magic lost, the lovers grew a-
weary,
As might have been foretold.» Out-
flamed Isolda:
«How? when he languished of a poi-
sonous wound,
Hath he not summoned her from
Brittany?
Brooked he not heart-break, when
his cruel wife
Belied the silver sail that wafted
healing?
Breathed not the queen her life upon
his bier?»
«Lady,» the stranger said, «ere thou-
sand circles,

Minstrels in Rome had joy to tell
how Athens
Paid woful tribute of her youth and
beauty
To sate a flaming dragon, until
Theseus
Adventurous sailed, and quelled the
evil custom;
Long while on island-cliff his aged
father
Gazed after gleaming of the silver sheet
Himself had lent to hoist for victory,
Requiting sable cloth of sacrifice;
Yet Theseus conquering forgot the
emblem;
When looked the sire upon a shadowy
sail,





Ocean received him. From the
Roman fable,
Did Norman Beroi, in a month of
leisure,
The history improve by weeping
sequel,
To charm yourself, and maids as
tender-hearted.»
With wordless indignation burned
Isolda,
While Adela commanded: «Friend,
your mercy,
Recount your lay after the ancient
manner.»

The wanderer made reply: «I know
not, lady,
If reached your ear the veritable
record
That minstrels spoil, and wantonly
embroider.
At age impassioned for achievement,
Tristan,
Who ardently desired that fame and
fortune
Arrive his merit's earning, not a title
Conceded to the prince, from Tintagel
Took ship for Cornwall, for his
uncle's country,
Where nameless he remained, and
earned his life

A soldier of the king. Austere Mor-
holt
Arrived, demanding tribute due from
Ireland;
What while none other dared take
up the challenge,
Tristan arose, and since the royal
rank
No adversary owneth save a peer,
Perforce revealed his birth, and from
his uncle
Took arms and knighthood. Toward
the isle of combat
The warriors oared, each in his shallop,
swimming
A steed behind, while from the shore
both armies



Breathless admired; then Tristan
insolent,
As though one boat would be enough
for one,
Thrust seaward Morholt's bark, and
moored his own.
Both heroes charged, broke spears,
and Tristan, hurt
By Morholt's venomed glaive, in
after sword-play
His rival smote, and deeply notched
the brand,
So that in foeman's skull adhered
a fragment.
Hanghty, he bade be freighted home
to Ireland



The body, lawful tribute due from
Cornwall.
Invaders sailed, and came with grief
to Dublin.
Shining Isolt, a princess skilled in
herbs,
Hung o'er her eme, but could no
more avail
Than draw the piece to bury in her
shrine.
In Tintagel reaped Tristran fruitful
harvest
Of love and praises, till that festering
wound
Embittered the sweet fountain of his
life;

Wherefore he pleaded with his dear
 companions,
On ocean to be launched, alone and
 oarless,
At mercy wafted of the winds and
 waters;
If pleased the saints bestow upon
 him healing,
Return he vowed within the year to
 Cornwall.
A tempest rose, and drove the bark
 toward Ireland,
Where forfeited lay life; his name he
 altered,
To pass for Pro, a trader out of
 Britain.

Secure he dwelt, and had a saving
balsam

From fair Isolt, yet never viewed the
maiden.

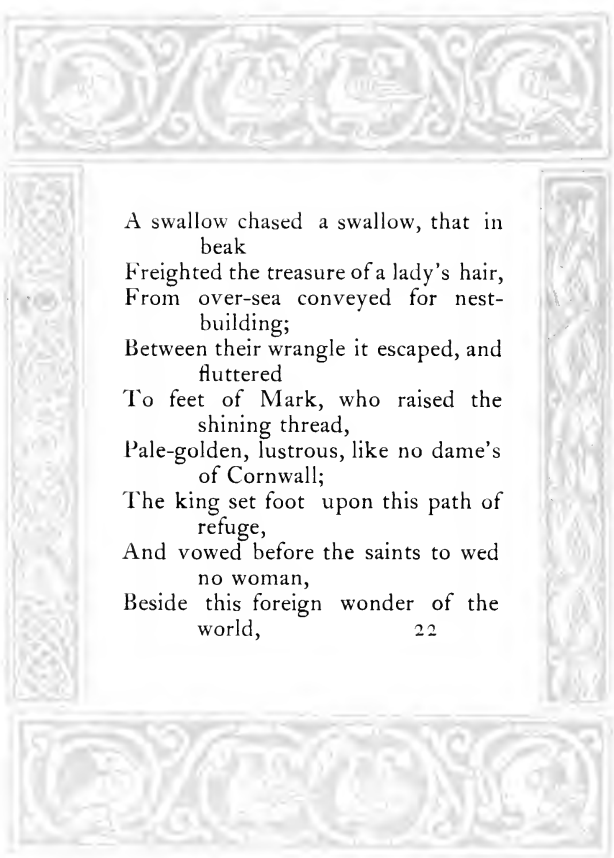
With twelvemonth's end he parted,
and through Britain

Arrived in Cornwall, where his ad-
vent made

A common holiday, by grateful Mark
Allowed inheritor; yet jealous barons
Would have their lord create a prince
for Cornwall,

And force upon him marriage, though
he liked not;

While eagerly in palace they debated,
Through dim and smoky rafters of
the hall



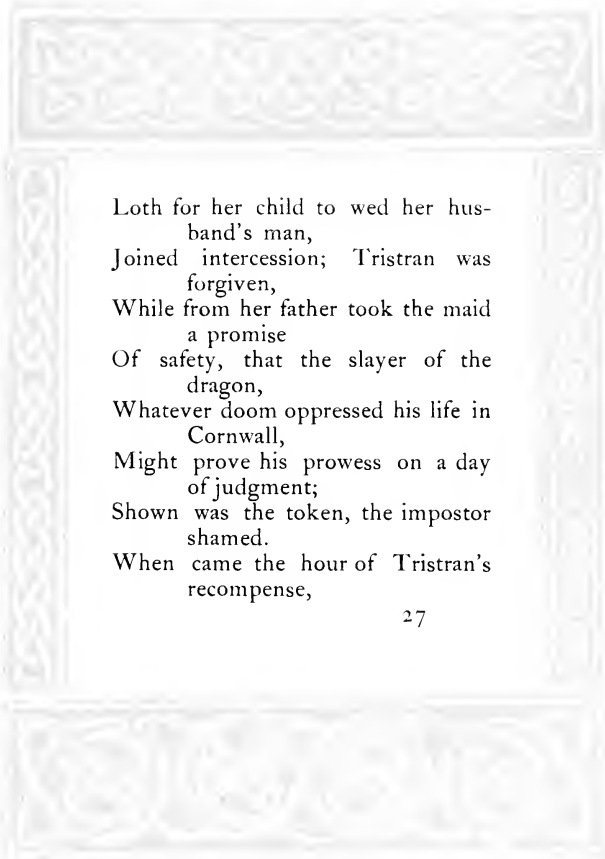
A swallow chased a swallow, that in
beak
Freighted the treasure of a lady's hair,
From over-sea conveyed for nest-
building;
Between their wrangle it escaped, and
fluttered
To feet of Mark, who raised the
shining thread,
Pale-golden, lustrous, like no dame's
of Cornwall;
The king set foot upon this path of
refuge,
And vowed before the saints to wed
no woman,
Beside this foreign wonder of the
world,

Whose token wings had wafted to
their presence.
Lords fared to seek, and at their head
went Tristran;
Again a storm compelled the keel to
Ireland.
Himself he called Trantris, his ship
forerunner
Of cornfleet, and in time of dearth
found welcome.
Meantime, on shore, a beast of flam-
ing throat
Ravaged the island; for deliverer's
meed,
The sovereign promised Isolt his one
daughter.

Adventurous fared Tristran, slew the
 dragon,
And in his hose concealed the tongue
 for trophy;
Then, parched and blackened by
 the fiery breath,
Plunged in a chilly bog, and lay a-
 swoon.
Another found the worm, and claimed
 the prize.
Fair Isolt, with Brengain her gov-
 erness,
Went forth to wonder at the scaly
 bulk
O'er verdant marshes knotted coil on
 coil;

Soon, admiration weary, raising eyes,
By yellow glimmer of a reedy pool
Was guided errant toward a golden
 helm,
And neighboring, the body of a
 knight,
Black, and half mergèd in the water
 cold;
The youth she bade take up, cher-
 ished, and balsamed
Within her bower to slow recovery.
Upon a morn, while lay the guest
 in bath,
Scouring his sword, she marked the
 jagged breach,
With unreflecting motion, from her
 casket

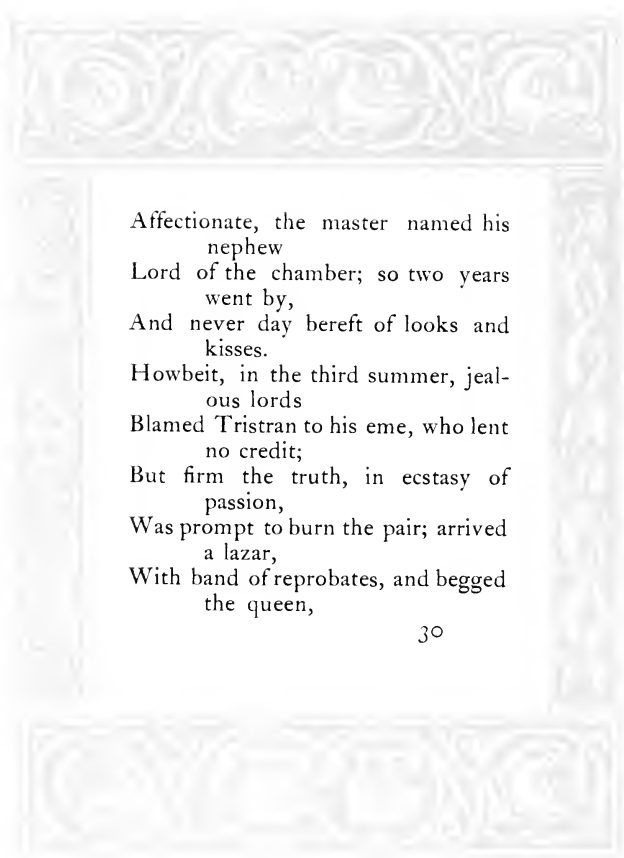
Drew forth the fragment, and behold!
it fitted!
Her savior and her nursling was the
slayer,
On whom her uncle's blood cried out
for vengeance!
The brand she seized, and would have
slain her friend
E'en as he bathed; while through his
peril, Tristran
Admired the glory of the golden tress,
And smiled, perceiving that his quest
had prospered.
With pleadings innocent he soothed
the maid
Who owed him debt so deep, and her
own mother,



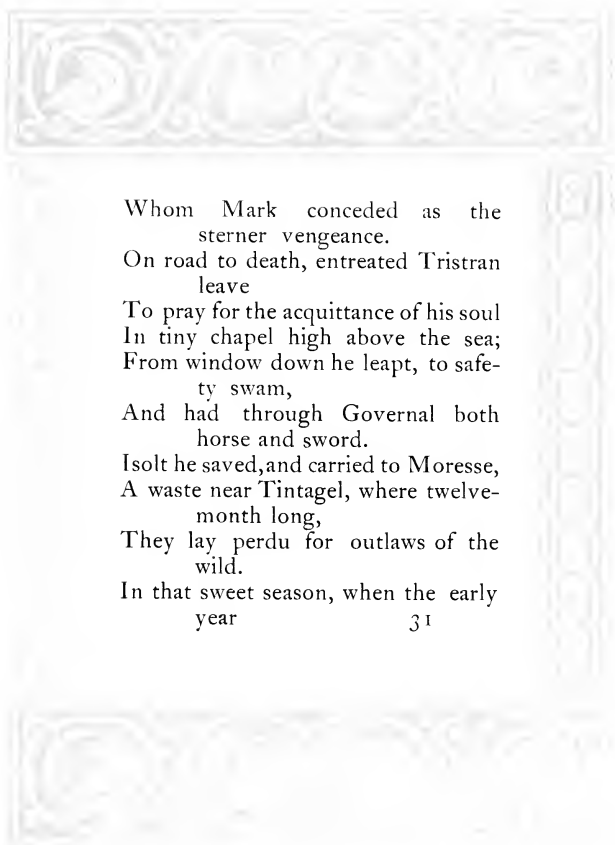
Loth for her child to wed her hus-
band's man,
Joined intercession; Tristran was
forgiven,
While from her father took the maid
a promise
Of safety, that the slayer of the
dragon,
Whatever doom oppressed his life in
Cornwall,
Might prove his prowess on a day
of judgment;
Shown was the token, the impostor
shamed.
When came the hour of Tristran's
recompense,

He made his wooing for the king of
Cornwall;
Rejoiced was Ireland with the royal
marriage
That war concluding, opened ports
for traffic,
While Isolt was content to be a queen.
Her mother, mindful that the foreign
husband
Might own the soul together with
the body,
A love-drink blended out of amorous
herbs,
Effectual that man and maid partaking
Four years must cling so close to
one another


As every day to meet, or else to die;
With tears and wishes sailed the ship
from Cornwall;
On sultry ocean fell an August calm;
Tristan demanded drink; a ready
varlet,
The vase mistaking, brought the cup
for wine.
He quaffed, and gave Isolt; after this
fashion
Joined were the twain, who until hour
of tasting,
Had cherished will nor thought. At
Tintagel
Landed the bride, and royal was the
wedding;




Affectionate, the master named his
nephew
Lord of the chamber; so two years
went by,
And never day bereft of looks and
kisses.
Howbeit, in the third summer, jealous
lords
Blamed Tristran to his eme, who lent
no credit;
But firm the truth, in ecstasy of
passion,
Was prompt to burn the pair; arrived
a lazar,
With band of reprobates, and begged
the queen,



Whom Mark conceded as the
sterner vengeance.
On road to death, entreated Tristan
leave
To pray for the acquittance of his soul
In tiny chapel high above the sea;
From window down he leapt, to safe-
ty swam,
And had through Govenal both
horse and sword.
Isolt he saved, and carried to Moresse,
A waste near Tintagel, where twelve-
month long,
They lay perdu for outlaws of the
wild.
In that sweet season, when the early
year




Hath girlish glee of her new emerald
gown,
Happened a mighty hunting in
Moresse,
Where thousand beaters drove the
frightened deer
Toward clearing where Mark waited;
then befell,
That ranger speeding down a wood-
land brook
In tangled coppice chanced on a
booth
Woven of willow branches, where
behold!
On couch of fir the exiles lay and
slept.



Round-eyed with fear, the servant
sought the king,
Who bade him hush, took horse, and
after rode;
But ere arriving, parted from his
guide,
Alone advanced, and tiptoe neared
the shelter.
Mark stared, and for a space beheld
no more
Than radiancy of the loosened hair
That dazzled eyes; then raging,
marked the queen
In slumber stir, and sway toward her
companion;
With countenance averted Tristran
lay,

And bright between the twain a
naked blade.
The gazer paused; what errand here?
awaken?
Be slain or slay, and then, remorse for
ever?
He stooped, and gently raising Tris-
tran's brand,
In lieu deposited his own. A noon-
tide ray
Through branches stealing, gilded
Isolt's breast;
Mark closed the crevice with his
hunting-glove,
And stealthily withdrew. The queen,
who felt

Through sleep his glances, stirred,
threw out an arm,
And shook the bower; the glove, from
height descending,
With ermine brushed her cheek. She
opened eyes,
Looked languidly, then wakened with
a cry;
Afoot stood Tristran, in his hand the
weapon:
Whose? Lo, within his grasp a gilded
hilt,
The king's! Dismayed, the exiles
leapt to horse,
Moresse abandoned, and by lonely
paths



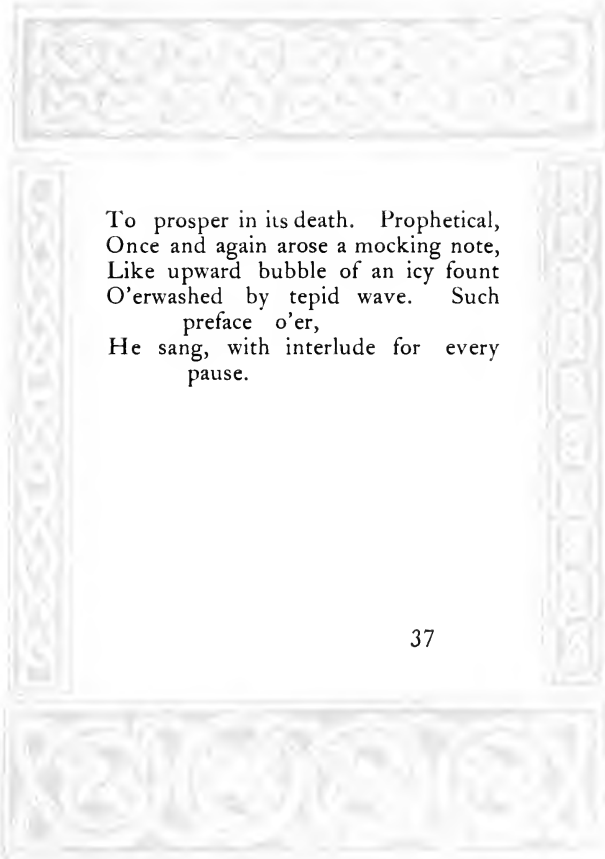
Went flying toward the wilderness
of Wales.

Henceforward, lady, doth proceed the
lay.»

The minstrel hushed, and from his
instrument,

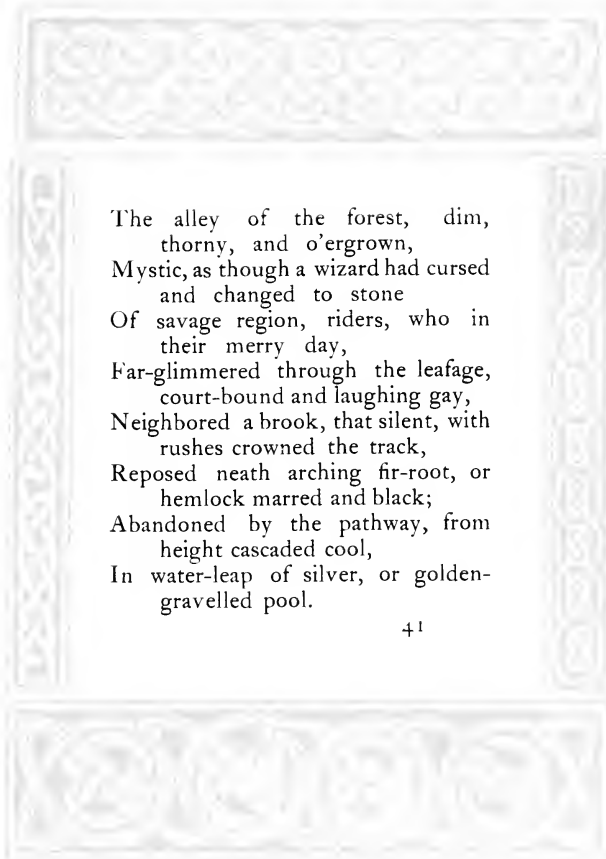
Preparing, drew romantic melody,
Love-music over-sweet, that in its
bosom

Cherished a seed of contrary emo-
tion,



To prosper in its death. Prophetical,
Once and again arose a mocking note,
Like upward bubble of an icy fount
O'erwashed by tepid wave. Such
preface o'er,
He sang, with interlude for every
pause.

The Lay

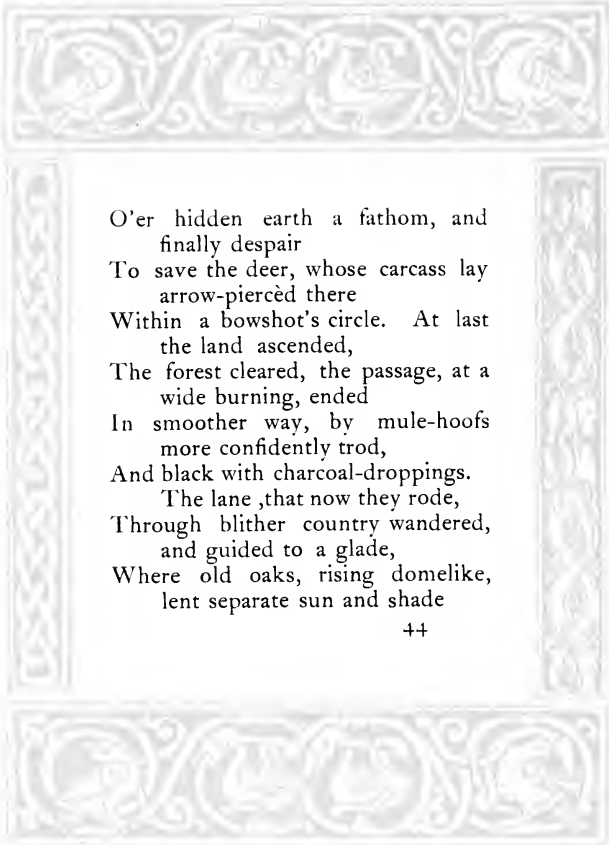


The alley of the forest, dim,
thorny, and o'ergrown,
Mystic, as though a wizard had cursed
and changed to stone
Of savage region, riders, who in
their merry day,
Far-glimmered through the leafage,
court-bound and laughing gay,
Neighbored a brook, that silent, with
rushes crowned the track,
Reposed neath arching fir-root, or
hemlock marred and black;
Abandoned by the pathway, from
height cascaded cool,
In water-leap of silver, or golden-
gravelled pool.

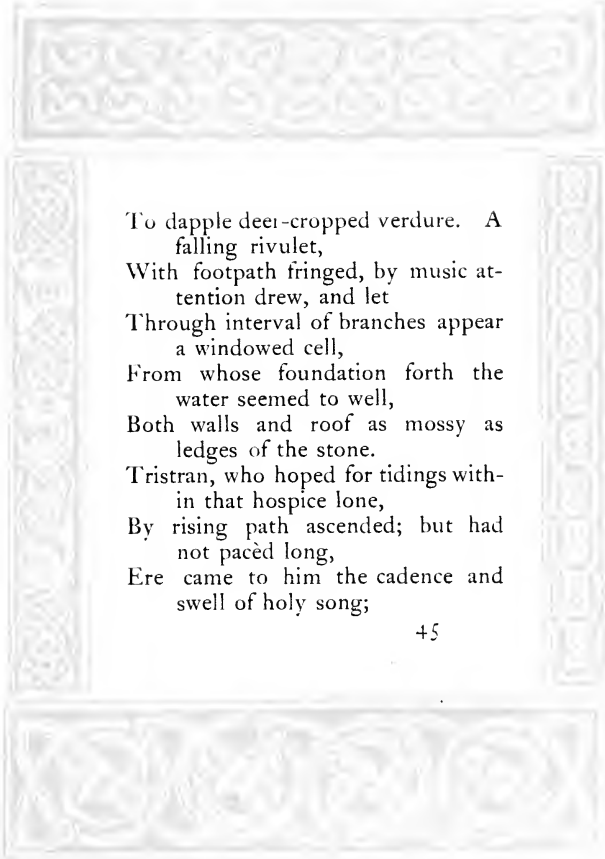
The gorge grew deep and deeper as
bolder rose the fell,
Gray rocks were freshly plumèd with
fern and blue harebell;
Beside the foamy torrent, a table
broad and dry,
Between eve-darkened ridges, a
shining sunset-sky.
On road dismounted Tristran, his
horse by bridle led
O'er shale, and rolling pebbles that
basined the brook-bed;
In hollow recess stabled, for evening-
fodder brought
Sweet river-grass by armfuls, and
fragrant fir-boughs sought,

To weave the nest of Isolt, outwear-
ied by their flight.

At dawn the exiles wakened, and
with the morrow light
As anxiously were errant along
the selfsame way,
Through dark and dreadful pine-
wood, where fallen columns lay
Long age of man to rot, and framed
a ceiling so
That bough to bare bough striding,
a woodsman well might go



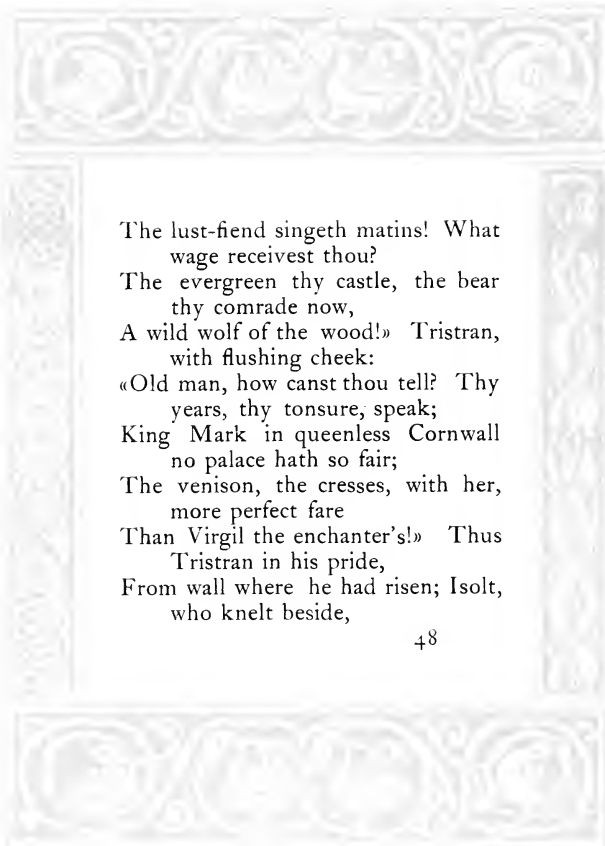
O'er hidden earth a fathom, and
finally despair
To save the deer, whose carcass lay
arrow-pierced there
Within a bowshot's circle. At last
the land ascended,
The forest cleared, the passage, at a
wide burning, ended
In smoother way, by mule-hoofs
more confidently trod,
And black with charcoal-droppings.
The lane, that now they rode,
Through blither country wandered,
and guided to a glade,
Where old oaks, rising domelike,
lent separate sun and shade



To dapple deer-cropped verdure. A
falling rivulet,
With footpath fringed, by music at-
tention drew, and let
Through interval of branches appear
a windowed cell,
From whose foundation forth the
water seemed to well,
Both walls and roof as mossy as
ledges of the stone.
Tristan, who hoped for tidings with-
in that hospice lone,
By rising path ascended; but had
not paced long,
Ere came to him the cadence and
swell of holy song;

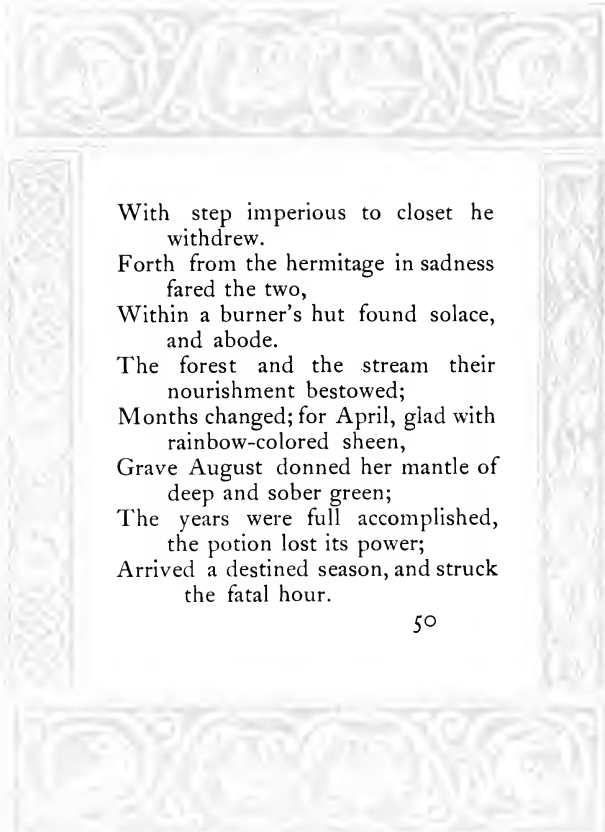
Wherefore he paused, alighted, set
Isolt down, and tied
Against a bough his charger, hung
up his sword beside,
Then footed toward the chapel, of
decoration bare,
And brown the frock of hermit who
mass was chanting there;
A low and rustic altar was draped
with woolen cloth.
The knight and lady lingered, of
worship nothing loth;
Their presence the room darkened;
devout, the celebrant
In pious recollection proceeded
with his chant,

Pronounced the awful scripture, that
 through a mystery
Doth wafer-bread transform to of-
 fered deity,
And made the elevation; by entrance
 of the cell,
Upon their knees before him Tris-
 tran and Isolt fell;
The office he continued, till ut-
 tered *missa est*.
When all was over, Tristran he
 studied, and addressed:
«How, exile, bandit, here? In noon-
 tide of thy fame
Once rally-word of Cornwall, now
 traitor, in whose name

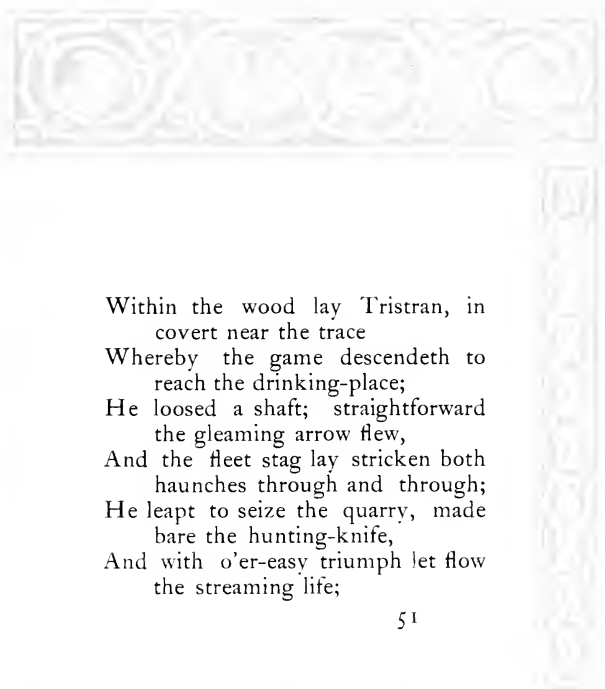


The lust-fiend singeth matins! What
wage receivest thou?
The evergreen thy castle, the bear
thy comrade now,
A wild wolf of the wood!» Tristran,
with flushing cheek:
«Old man, how canst thou tell? Thy
years, thy tonsure, speak;
King Mark in queenless Cornwall
no palace hath so fair;
The venison, the cresses, with her,
more perfect fare
Than Virgil the enchanter's!» Thus
Tristran in his pride,
From wall where he had risen; Isolt,
who knelt beside,


Threw wide both arms, shrieked out,
and lay on pavement prone,
While bursting from their net, her
locks concealed the stone:
«Nay, never curse him, no! If we
have trespassed, think,
It is that we have sharèd the
poison, the love-drink;
Such cup my mother mingled for
binding other twain;
Upon the sultry sea her care forgot
Bregain;
Hers be the fault!» The monk:
«What benefit therein,
To chasten soul that's dead in tres-
pass and in sin?»



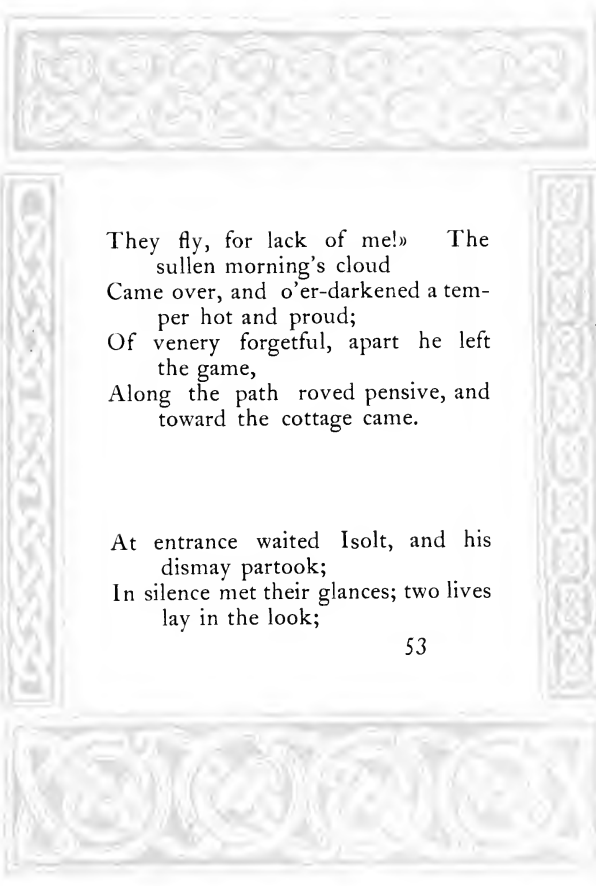
With step imperious to closet he
withdrew.
Forth from the hermitage in sadness
fared the two,
Within a burner's hut found solace,
and abode.
The forest and the stream their
nourishment bestowed;
Months changed; for April, glad with
rainbow-colored sheen,
Gave August donned her mantle of
deep and sober green;
The years were full accomplished,
the potion lost its power;
Arrived a destined season, and struck
the fatal hour.



Within the wood lay Tristran, in
covert near the trace
Whereby the game descendeth to
reach the drinking-place;
He loosed a shaft; straightforward
the gleaming arrow flew,
And the fleet stag lay stricken both
haunches through and through;
He leapt to seize the quarry, made
bare the hunting-knife,
And with o'er-easy triumph let flow
the streaming life;



Then paused to gaze, absorbing the
temper of the day,
Its mood of recollection, its veil
of sober gray,
A silence that forebodeth the falling
of the year.
He mused: «I lurk in forest, destroy
the timid deer;
Afield, this moment, Cornwall her
banner doth advance;
I see the pennon shining, behold the
levelled lance;
Ranks meet, and shafts are broken;
knightswheel, and swords are out;
Alas! in whirling mellay is wanting
my war-shout,



They fly, for lack of me!» The
sullen morning's cloud
Came over, and o'er-darkened a tem-
per hot and proud;
Of venery forgetful, apart he left
the game,
Along the path roved pensive, and
toward the cottage came.

At entrance waited Isolt, and his
dismay partook;
In silence met their glances; two lives
lay in the look;

On surface, swift repulsion, when
the heart, satiate
With viand of its craving, from hunger
turns toward hate;
Below, the human terror, if voyager
forlorn,
Oarless and unbefriended, behold his
vessel borne
Adown the leaping rapid with fleeter,
dreaded speed,
While murmureth low thunder, and
saving shores recede;
Not yet hath he collected his courage
for the fall.
Embracing every passion, and still
retaining all,

Like golden armor, meshes of closely
woven chain
That lately blunted arrows of misery
and pain,
From now, to Thought and Con-
science will leave the naked life.
Tristan was first to utter, with accent
passion-rife:
«What hardship hast thou suffered
for my sake, Isolt, queen!
Harsh setting of thy beauty the rude
and savage scene!
My madness curseth Cornwall, of aid
and comfort crost;
Thy maidens sit neglected, their
dower and wedlock lost,

With burners of the forest their lady
hid the while!»
She presently responded, with sad
and tender smile:
«Go seek Ogrin the hermit: be all
within his will,
If thy desire he censure, or inward
hope fulfil.»

In vicinage of Tintagel, and prospect
of its wall,
The king enjoyed a pleasance, retreat
of flowers all,

Rose-tangle, lily-mead, and linden-
alley long,
Of verdure fetlock-deep: and did
thereto belong
A royal bower; apart, scant furlong
from the place,
Where beeches one by one enclosed
a circle-space,
Below a pine, that storied green floors
of light and shade,
An ancient fount its basin and step-
ping-stone displayed;
From mouths of mossy lions the
laughing water streamed,
And plashing in the cistern, gray
marble over-gleamed;

By flower-crownèd channel the mer-
ry rill did go,
Beneath the house dive laughing, and
hence emergent, flow
To brim the neighboring river. At
eve of hunting, slept
Below that roof its lord, whose
knights about him kept
Their rest, and tapers burned. Red-
golden dawned the day;
The sovereign woke; dark-couchant
his drowsy vassals, lay,
And paled the waning tapers. A
hand the window smote,
And a voice called: «The King!»
Mark wondered, and took note;

A rider halted by, a letter slipt to
floor;
The gazer leapt from couch, and
Tristan viewed once more.

Toward palace-hall of Tintagel, up
marble of the stair,
Trooped knights, and by precedence
were ranked on benches there;
Their ruler throned on dais, of aspect
dark and proud.
His chaplain held a letter, and rising,
read aloud;

«To him who hath of Cornwall
control and royal right,
Salute and greeting sendeth Ogrin
the Anchorite.
King, when thy lords debated thy
marriage in the hall,
Twain swallows in their chaffer a
lady's hair let fall,
Ell-long, pale-golden-gleaming; then
didst thou say and swear
By father's soul in blessing, to wed
no other fair
Beside the world's one beauty; to seek
her island home,
Thy nephew on adventure hath wan-
dered ocean-foam;

Her hath he found in Ireland, and
met in her the maid
Whose eme he slew in battle, and
with the body paid
Arrear of Cornwall's tribute: the
champion did she take
Cold from the bog, and blasted by
breath of the fire-drake;
To Tintagel he brought her, in fresh-
ness of her youth:
Before the saints thy promise, to
render love and truth,
In self thyself discrowning, to cherish
her instead.
Tristan thou madest lord of chamber
and of bed;

Soon, in thy jealous frenzy ,to world's
rebuke and blame,
This jewel of thine owning hast des-
tined for the flame,
Then thrown away on lazars; to that
accursed band
Hath Tristran meted justice denied
by thine own hand;
Toward safety of the forest did he
convey the queen;
Thyself hast seen them lying, a naked
sword between.
Declareth thy confessor, not so may-
est thou disown
Her part by vow conceded in thee
and in thy throne;

To her unbar thy heaven, hereafter
unto thee
As thou hast hope that Peter may
turn with ready key.
Thus saith Ogrin: thine answer sus-
pend to the Red Cross.»

The chaplain read no further. Mark
listened at a loss,
Half loth, half inly yielding. He
bade his knights bestow
Their counsel; words were bartered,
and looks shot to and fro,

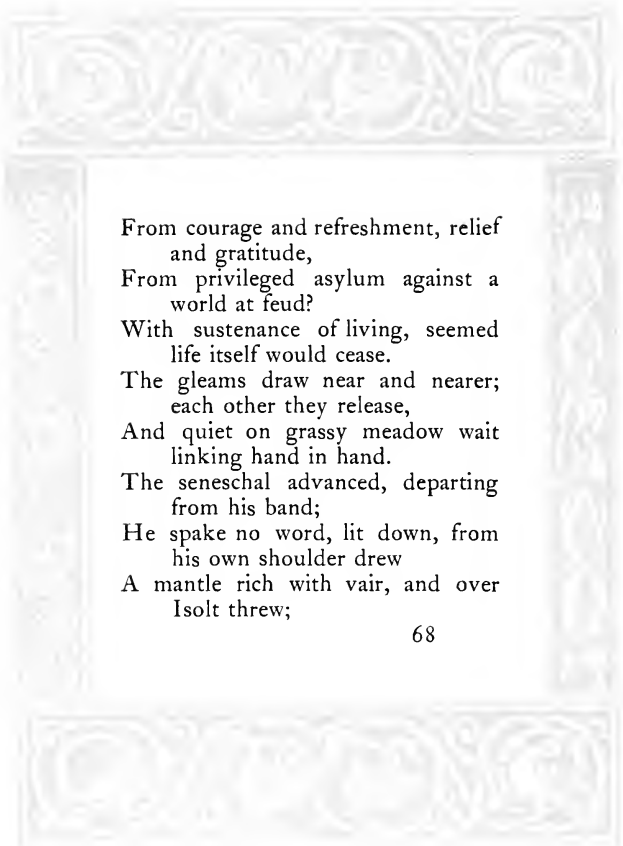
Till spake with words of wisdom an
ancient vavasor:
«The man who loseth jewel that
quickened him before
With confidence and courage, hath
sorrow and heart-pain,
Till time that he recover that pearl
of price again;
Below if he espy a gleam of his
desire,
He hath no pride, but stoopeth, to
rescue from the mire,
And carry into palace, where pure
it rayeth so,
That oft for evening-banquet unlit
may candles go,

While feasters linger peaceful in
radiancy mild.
So she, our gentle planet that vanished
in the wild,
And left our joy benighted, henceforth
may reappear
From long eclipse more lucent, and
reign in heavens clear,
Full-orbèd moon of Cornwall. For
Tristan, let him go
Abroad to serve, where rulers their
friendship may bestow
On knight that lendeth sword, and
with heroic essay
Doth Fortune court. Elapsed a
twelvemonth and a day,

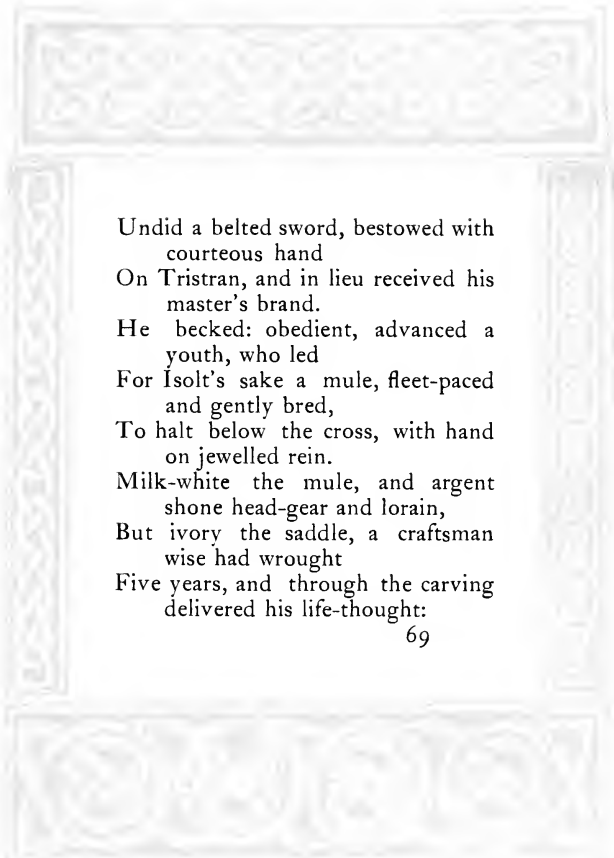
In Cornwall live his welcome, when
 he hath yielded oath,
Upon the saints avouching his innocence and troth.»
The barons praised the speaker, and
 Mark declared assent;
His chaplain wrote a letter, and forth
 the summons went.

Pale shone the yellow dawning, and
 dewy-white the road,
As over march of Cornwall Tristran
 and Isolt rode,

In russet vesture kirtled like burners
of the wood.
With prime emerged from forest,
their journey they pursued,
Till highways twain protecting, rose
holy the Red Cross.
On verdure they alighted, and foliage
across,
Had glimpse of gold and azure, the
splendor and the sheen
Of knights by Mark commanded for
home-bringing his queen.
In arms they clasped each other, heart
beating faint to heart;
Now time had come to sever; yet
breathing, how depart



From courage and refreshment, relief
and gratitude,
From privileged asylum against a
world at feud?
With sustenance of living, seemed
life itself would cease.
The gleams draw near and nearer;
each other they release,
And quiet on grassy meadow wait
linking hand in hand.
The seneschal advanced, departing
from his band;
He spake no word, lit down, from
his own shoulder drew
A mantle rich with vair, and over
Isolt threw;



Undid a belted sword, bestowed with
courteous hand
On Tristran, and in lieu received his
master's brand.
He becked: obedient, advanced a
youth, who led
For Isolt's sake a mule, fleet-paced
and gently bred,
To halt below the cross, with hand
on jewelled rein.
Milk-white the mule, and argent
shone head-gear and lorain,
But ivory the saddle, a craftsman
wise had wrought
Five years, and through the carving
delivered his life-thought:

Upon the mount knelt Isaac, both
arms behind him bound,
In childish terror gazing; his father
on that ground
Stood with averted eyes, and raised
a curving sword;
From firmament descended the angel
of the Lord.
In front so much; the rear a sterner
legend bore;
Jephthah on way to meet, his
daughter danced o'er,
Arms wide for her embrace, and tres-
ses backward blown;
Toward Heaven the knight raised
palms, in attitude of stone.

The baron raised his dame, and with
the lady rode
Where clustering the lances of his
companions showed;
Before, twelve maids a-row sat mount-
ed on the green;
A little Isolt reddened; they bowed,
and bowed the queen.
The spaces of the greenwood were
lit with colors clear;
Below the cross stood Tristran, and
saw them disappear.

In Tintagel, at morning prime, the
 air with freshness beamed;
Saints rang from all their belfries,
 and forth the city streamed
Toward minster, where their lady,
 from exile saved, should greet
Saint Samson, her protector, with
 thanks and praises meet.
She walked not penitential, gray-
 smocked and ancle-bare,
But robe of clinging purple, and
 mantle starry-fair.
In front, twelve maidens pairwise,
 whose order children four,
White-innocent, preceded, and Corn-
 wall's banner bore.

She knelt by the main altar, and
adoration paid,
While anthems clear and clearer rose
climbing grade on grade
The shining stair celestial. She signed:
advanced a child,
Who bore upon both elbows a cloth
irradiate mild,
Of pale and shimmering change, that
gloriously told
The passion of the saint; such web
of mystic gold
A bishop blest; from him, an acolyte
received,
And reverent, draped the altar. Her
offering achieved,

Retired the queen, to find by minster-
steps prepared
Her palfrey and her knights; with
seneschal, she fared
To court, where welcomed Mark his
wife at mounting-stone,
Kissed on the lips, and led to hall
and ivory throne.

At sea, from purple heights swooped
down a freshening gale,
Tugged at the lines, and bellied the
square and painted sail.

With forward face sat Tristran, in
that inanimate mood
When the exhausted spirit, resigned
to lassitude,
Worn out by fruitless labor, of idle
hardship tired,
Weary of all it hoped for, expected,
or admired,
Doth feel nor consolation, defiance,
nor distress,
But only that it fainteth in world-wide
loneliness.
He made a thoughtless motion; an
idly-dropping hand
On swordhilt smote; half conscious,
he bared the shining brand,

His own, King Mark's no longer!
As reek bursts into flame,
Such upward-soaring ardor his spirit
overcame,
As burneth warrior, passioned to
change in battle-hour
Dull wistfulness to courage, and
pining into power;
He heard the northwind whistle, be-
held the billows flow:
«Roll on, blue Waves my cousins!
Thou, Wind, my brother, blow!
He turned toward fading Cornwall;
horizonward did dwell,
Vague, aery, and cloudlike, the
towers of Tintagel.

The song was ended, but its after-play
Reversed the prelude; for the lighter
 strain,
That latterly had risen up and reigned
Emergent from love-languish, opened
 now
The secret of its being, and revealed
A grieving heart of deeper melan-
 choly.
Isolda, who had listened with
 contempt,

Unsoftened by the plaintive music,
cried:
«Clothes, and a throne!» Half jest-
ing, Adela:
«Think, child, to live on berries!»
For her part,
The maid looked boundless scorn.
The countess laughed,
And putting all her mind upon her
work,
Among her silk preferred a vermeil
skein,
To lend the dragon's tongue an
ardency.



ESSAY

I. OPINIONS

The story is known only through French literature; but inasmuch as the scene is laid in Celtic lands, it has usually been assumed that the romancers must have used Celtic material, communicated through bilingual reciters, Welsh or Breton, whose prose narrations may have transmitted the substance of an early Cymric epos.

The distinguished advocate of this opinion was Gaston Paris, who considered that modes of life and ideas show a barbaric quality incompatible with admission of French authorship; from a divine and mythologic status, the chief actors have been reduced to romantic proportions.

Of late years has prevailed a doctrine that the several romances are to be regarded, not as independently derived from Cymric or other sources, but rather as variants of a single French original.

As the result of an elaborate inquiry contained in the second volume of his *Thomas* (1905), Joseph Bédier concluded that the common source was an Anglo-Norman poem belonging to the early twelfth century; Celtic influence he allowed but minimized; the love-tale he thought purely a reflection of French chivalry.

The verse above printed in part outlines the older form of the tale, respecting which the following pages will furnish further information. Certain individual opinions are also briefly indicated; details and references may be sought in the work of Bédier.

II. MATERIAL

The history is known in three forms, namely, two rhymed versions of the twelfth century, and a prose romance of the thirteenth century.

The older poetic version is preserved in outline through the German translation of Eilhart of Oberg (before 1200). Affiliated is a fragment (about forty-five hundred lines) of a poet named Berol (edition *c.* 1200).

The later account in verse is the composition of an author named Thomas, whose work exists only in fragments, but in outline is preserved through the translations of Robert, author of a Norse saga (1226), and Gottfried of Strassburg (before 1220); based on Thomas is also the English poem called "Sir Tristrem" (*c.* 1300).

The prose (from *c.* 1230?) is in the main an imaginative composition, which in its earlier portion retains the skeleton of a narrative akin to Eilhart's; in this version, the tale has been completely merged in Arthurian romance.

Important also are two episodic poems, the *Chievrefoil* of Marie of France (*c.* 1160?), and a lay reciting an adventure of Tristan in the character of Fool, noteworthy as giving in summary an action akin to Eilhart's. A later lay on the same theme follows the story of Thomas.

Several works otherwise unconnected with the cycle have episodes, which, however, bestow no valuable information, while folk-books and translations in several languages derive from one or other of the sources already mentioned.

III. THEME

The story describes the manner in which a young knight, charged with conveying the bride of his uncle and benefactor, through the influence of a philter proves unfaithful to his trust, and is led to maintain illicit relations with the lady.

As usual in fully developed romances, the tale begins with an account of the parentage and youth of the hero; after such preface, the story is divisible into two portions.

The first part relates the inception of the attachment, the secret intercourse of the lovers, and their flight into the forest; the action ends with the restoration of the queen to her husband, and the departure of the hero from the realm.

The second part recounts the foreign marriage of the hero, a revival of his former passion, and repeated visits to his uncle's country; the story concludes with the death of the lovers in a single day.

IV. INFANCY

Rivalen, king of Lothian in Scotland, being desirous to see more of the world than the limitations of his petty realm allow, takes service with Marc, king of Cornwall, at the time engaged in hostilities with Ireland. Here he attracts the attention of the king's sister, whom he finally persuades to elope; at sea, she dies in childbirth, leaving a son, who, as destroyer of his mother, receives the significant name Tristran (Griever, that is to say, Maker of Grief).

IV. INFANCY

Having attained the age of fifteen years (when a hero of romance ought to begin his career), the youth desires to distinguish himself (and obtain knighthood) in a foreign country; his father approves his plan and gives him a ship; accompanied by Govenal, he lands in Cornwall, where he remains incognito, and enters the service of his uncle.

By Thomas this brief introduction has been expanded ten-fold. Blanche-flor flies with Rivalen to his kingdom of Ermenie, where she is married; her husband falls by the hand of his feudal lord the Duke of Brittany and she dies of grief; the infant is cared for by the faithful marshal, who brings him up as his own son. The youth is stolen by traders, who are terrified by a storm, and land him on the coast of Cornwall; he comes to court, where he pleases the king by knowledge of venery and music. The marshal seeks and finds Tristran, whose rank is now revealed, and whom the king accepts as heir; he receives knighthood, and begins a chivalric career by avenging his father.

In the Prose, nomenclature and scenery are freely altered. Helyabel, sister of Marc, king of Cornouaille, marries Meliadus of Leonois. While hunting, her husband is detained by an enchantress; Helyabel seeks him in the forest, where she brings forth a babe and succumbs. The child is saved by Merlin, and committed to the keeping of Govenal. In order to avoid the persecutions of a cruel stepmother, the tutor takes his pupil from the realm, and finally arrives in Cornwall, where Tristran abides unknown.

V. FIRST PART: IN CORNWALL

The pivot of the action is the partaking of the love-drink; what precedes is preparatory, what follows consequent.

The latter portion of the narrative describes secret interviews, discovery, flight, and exile; such would naturally be the course of any secret attachment. The antecedent chapters, however, constitute an artistic construction, which becomes comprehensible only through attention to the design.

The romance belongs to a class of mediæval compositions which exalt the authority of sexual love by emphasizing its victory over gentile and social obligations. On the hero's side, connection by marriage makes the amour in a religious sense inexcusable; from a chivalric point of view, breach of sacred trust forms the one unpardonable offence. On her part, the heroine is bound to avenge the blood of a kinsman. These obstacles, strong as God and man can erect, are in a moment swept away by the force of conquering desire.

The transition, if unexpected, would be violent and repulsive: it therefore becomes necessary to establish ties having a tendency to unite the pair. Each is made preserver of the other, the maid by healing an incurable wound, the man through destruction of a devouring monster.

The conception is skilfully carried out in an elaborate narrative, which makes the first achievement of the youthful knight consist in slaying the uncle of the heroine, an exploit followed by two journeys to her country, in which the hero appears successively as rescued and rescuer.

VI. ISOLT AS HEALER

On the island, Tristan sets adrift the boat of his enemy (as sign of the result). That Morholt employs a poisoned weapon indicates semi-demonic quality (so *Aliscans*, 1123). He loses a hand, flies to the boat, receives a wound not immediately fatal, and is sent to Ireland; arrived, his men summon Isolt, who hastens, but finds him dead (the medical skill of the heroine is thus ingeniously indicated). Eilhart makes Tristan take his harp for solace on his adventurous voyage; other narrators add, that on the Irish coast the hero attracts attention by harp-play; this trait also may have stood in Eilhart's source, but have been overlooked. Tristan gives himself out as Pro, a minstrel who is also a trader, and is healed through remedies sent by Isolt, whom he does not meet; only in his second journey does he use the name Trantris. Other accounts make the hero call himself Trantris also in his first visit, and introduce him to Isolt, whose music-master he becomes. Seeing that the tendency of these variations is to effect a closer connection between different chapters of the history, I suppose (contrary to Bédier) that as in other cases, so here also, Eilhart's narrative may be accepted as representing the original romance. If so, the agreement of the later versions only shows a common secondary source.

The island of the duel, which in Eilhart is anonymous, *Folie Tristan* and the Prose call the Isle of Saint Samson. Now this name is mentioned by Crestien, whose lost poem may probably have been the required intermediary.

VII. TRISTRAN AS DELIVERER

The theme of the dragon-slayer and the impostor is known to have been from early Hellenic time part of European and Asiatic folk-lore.

According to Eilhart, Isolt, having reached the scene of combat, observes the track of a steed not shod in Ireland, and finds a charred shield; the knight is sought, and the gleam of the helmet perceived. In the bath scene, Isolt only threatens the hero with the vengeance of her father, and does not (as in Thomas) herself brandish the weapon. She acts with entire independence; it is Brengain, not her mother, who counsels her to forgive the guest. On the day appointed for the trial, the friends of Tristran, who have been privately summoned, appear in splendid attire, and attract universal attention; Isolt then makes her appearance, holding by the hand the true slayer of the dragon. The impostor recedes, and Tristran, acknowledged to be victor, prefers his suit on behalf of his uncle, alleging that he himself is too young to marry.

In later versions, Isolt naturally recognizes her old friend Trantris, who is presently discovered to be identical with Tristran; the latter, having been pardoned, proceeds to inform the ladies respecting his status as ambassador; such frankness from an acquaintance might be required by delicacy, but in the case of an unknown knight would scarce have been proper until his title had been proved; here also Eilhart's narrative seems to me consistent and earlier.

VIII. THE LOVE-DRINK

In this central chapter appears a striking contrast between different types of the story. While other versions describe the effect of the potion as permanent, Eilhart and Berol make its influence to have been temporary; such evanescence, far from being accidental, is postulated by their most interesting passages. The prevailing view, accepted even by Bédier, has held the more sentimental conception to have been original, and viewed the repentance of the lovers as a piece of later moralizing. To me the reverse judgment appears acceptable; I see no reason for setting aside the authority of Eilhart, whose account regularly exhibits the oldest accessible form of the history; the change from a transitory to a perpetual enchantment would be in the usual line of completer romantization; in the ensuing narrative, we perceive that the lovers have become free agents, who voluntarily arrange a separation intended to be final.

The philter is to be administered on the wedding night, by the mother of the bride or her representative. It seems possible that such presentation may depend on a survival of ancient marriage custom. It is easy to conceive what superstitions might attach themselves to such a practice, and how speculations might arise in regard to the consequences of mistake. Yet since no similar French usage is attested, the suggestion can be offered only by way of conjecture, and as indicative of one method in which the development might conceivably have been effected.

IX. CONCEALMENT AND DISCOVERY

The delusions of the Deceived Husband furnish a theme inexhaustibly amusing to mediæval readers. The king, who puts implicit confidence in his nephew, will not listen to accusers, but in the end has ocular evidence of over-familiarity and excludes his kinsman from the privileges of the bedchamber. Tristran proposes to leave the realm, but must first visit his mistress. A dwarf versed in astrology has foreknowledge of the interview, and notifies the king, who is concealed in the branches of a pine overhanging the well. His shadow is observed, and the conversation ingeniously directed in such manner as to mislead an auditor; the hero, who declares his intention of going abroad, entreats the intercession of the queen, to the end that he may be enabled to make an appearance corresponding with his rank; on the ground of her husband's anger she declines. Marc, satisfied by what he has heard, humbles himself before his wife, and restores Tristran's former authority. The dwarf, anxious to retrieve his reputation, obtains permission to make another experiment; Tristran is charged with a message to King Arthur at Carlisle, while his uncle announces an intention of absence; the chamber is guarded, and the hero taken; fresh blood-stains preclude the possibility of denial. The king, whose fury is proportional to his former faith, is resolved to destroy the guilty pair. In vain the friendly seneschal urges that an accused knight is entitled to a trial; in indignation Dinas withdraws to his estates, but on the

IX. CONCEALMENT AND DISCOVERY

way, meets Tristran, who is being led to execution; he persuades the guards to leave the prisoner unbound, and an escape follows. With Govenal, the lovers remain in the forest, where they are soon joined by Tristran's hound Hudent; the dog is trained to overcome his habit of baying on the trail, and to follow the chase in silence.

According to modern ideas, the honor of the husband is tarnished by cruelty; mediæval readers would have found in his conduct only the legitimate severity of a strict ruler, and been prone to admire rather than censure. It was, no doubt, in order to prevent transfer of sympathy that later authors chose to describe the king as a malicious weakling.

The Prose introduces an episode in which the hero is made to rescue Isolt from the hands of a former lover, who has obtained from Marc the promise of an unlimited boon, and as his guerdon demanded the queen; the trait serves the purpose of adding another link to the obligations which indissolubly unite the lovers; in more fantastic form, a corresponding incident is related by Thomas. Now, in his *Lancelot*, Crestien of Troyes is pleased to recount a similar adventure, in which Guenievre is surrendered by Arthur, but delivered by the hero of the poem. The resemblance, combined with other similar cases of correspondence, warrants a belief that in the Arthurian work Crestien recast situations borrowed from the story of Tristran, such as he found current, and which he had probably already narrated in his own lost version of the Tristran romance.

IX. CONCEALMENT AND DISCOVERY

Thomas continues the narration in a manner peculiar to himself. After the chamber scene, the counsellors of the king advise that the queen shall be required to justify herself by legal process; she elects to undergo the ordeal of handling hot iron. The hero, after assisting her in this difficulty, withdraws to Wales, where he slays a giant, and whence he sends Isolt the present of a fairy hound. At her recommendation, he returns to Tintagel; the suspicions of the husband revive, and the lovers are banished.

In her lay, Marie makes Tristran retire to his native country of South Wales, whence he makes a visit to Cornwall; he is afterwards recalled by the king. Marie's account is incompatible with any existing version of the tale; yet, inasmuch as she notes the deaths of the lovers in one day, it must imply a similar narrative.

According to Eilhart, in the fountain scene, when Tristran professes an intent to abandon the country, he declares that his armor has been impounded by this uncle (so Berol, l. 204), and entreats the queen to request its release. The implication seems to be that the king has required security for the appearance of his nephew before a court of his peers, and that, aware of his bad cause, and consequently unwilling to accept the ordeal of battle, the hero prefers to fly. Such, in *Amis and Amiles*, is the course pursued by the former, when accused of intimacy with the princess. In the extant Tristran, the circumstances appear to have been glossed; we obtain, perhaps, a glimpse of an earlier form of the story, in which the movement was more energetic.

X. EXILE AND RETURN

In this section the narratives of Eilhart and Berol, while dependent on a common source, yet differ widely. The German poem is a bare paraphrase, the French an expanded and decorated recast.

The conception is striking. The lovers linger in a wood near Tintagel, and after discovery fly to the depths of the wilderness, there to endure the usual hardships of exile, which are brooked with equanimity so long as the magic lasts. As soon as the veil of enchantment drops, they open their eyes, behold their situation as the world sees it, find their status intolerable, and lose no moment in arranging a separation and return to society. In promoting this choice, material sufferings play a part more effective than the edifications of the preacher.

The scene is dependent on the idea that the love-drink was meant to have but temporary effect. Versions of the later class, when the influence of the philter is regarded as life-long, have no room for such description; with Thomas the forest residence becomes an idyl, in which the abode of a giant furnishes shelter, and affection precludes care for food.

Which of these conceptions is in order of time prior? It is easy to understand how the constant tendency toward romantization should obliterate the notion of repentance, but impossible to understand a reversal of the process. The intervention of the hermit can belong only to a scene like Berol's; now the appearance of the name Ogrin in *Folie*

X. EXILE AND RETURN

Tristan furnishes evidence that the activity of this personage belonged also to the original romance.

The effect is weakened by the sequel, in which the reader finds himself once more mired in the bog of intrigue; he wishes that the story had ended with the queen's return, and is inclined to accept the suggestion that there may have really been a time in which it did so terminate.

It is true that Eilhart provides for a continuation; the hero makes Isolt a present of his hound, and the dog is afterwards utilized in the action (Berol, by way of addition, contributes the gift on the queen's part of a ring). However, just before this mention, we read: "Up rode King Marc, took the queen, and kept her with love for many years." This notice may once have ended the history; the second hand, who appended a sequel and in some measure recast the first half of the tale, may well have appended the gift which serves to attach a continuation.

Eilhart, in describing the efficacy of the potion, affirms that it was calculated to act in full force for four years, and subsequently in a modified degree to endure through life. Such lines may very well have stood in his source; but the nature of the action makes it plain that the poet who so forcibly sketched the misery of the forest could have entertained no such sophisticated idea; with him, the efficacy of the draught was conceived as completely vanishing, as leaving the lovers to the light of common day and the accepted judgments of the world.

X. EXILE AND RETURN

The opinion of Bédier, that a story which ended with final separation would not be artistic and could never have been popular, does not appear to me entirely acceptable. The queen is restored under the assumption of innocence, a pretext sufficient to salve marital pride. In an Irish tale having a similar theme, that of Diarmid and Grainne, the lady ultimately falls into the hands of her husband; and an early Anglo-Norman might have opined that experience and probability favored such result.

There are two ways in which the evolution might have been effected; either the poem (like Crestien's *Perceval*) might in the first instance have remained unfinished or else (like Crestien's *Lancelot*) the romance may have been designedly episodic, and the reader left to gather the future fortunes of the hero from other romances in the time familiar.

When discovered in the wood, the exiles are separated by a drawn sword. The allusion is to a ritual act, in which the sanctity of a lady is indicated; as, in *Amis and Amiles*, the former by this symbol betokens respect for the wife of a friend. The trait seems out of place in a narrative in which the potency of the love-draught is represented as still operative. In *Eilhart*, the pledge of chastity must be set down as only more ignoble deception; that such cannot have been the original intent is evidenced by the simple beauty of the narrative. To me it appears that we have a second instance in which the reader may glance between the lines of the extant narration, and indistinctly make out an antecedent

X. EXILE AND RETURN

stage, in which the movement was more rapid, and the enchantment less perennial.

XI. SECOND PART: IN BRITTANY

The romancers accumulate obstacles in order to glorify the triumph of passion. One would think that in this direction the limit had been attained; the hero, however, has not yet been provided with a wife to neglect; this resource is now embraced, and the rivalry of heroine and anti-heroine furnishes interest inexhaustible.

The action is repetitive; we are presented with a second Isolt, with renewed secret visits to her rival, with new attempts at arrest and new escapes, with a second wound and intervention of the heroine as healer. According to accepted rules of interpretation, such duplication should be construed as implying the activity of a second hand; the conclusion adopted on other grounds is thus confirmed, that the later half of the romance has been superadded.

The tale ought now to recite the adventures of Tristran in the foreign country to which he has been sent. Eilhart, however, knows nothing of such exploits, and remarks that the hero's stay was short; probably his source limited itself to a similar indication.

It is necessary to explain how Tristran obtained a wife; but homage is paid to the popularity of Arthurian romance, by making him previously visit the country of the Briton.

XII. ARTHURIAN EPISODE

Tristan arrives at the court of Arthur, where he obtains the friendship of Walwain. It is the custom of youthful knights to ride forth in quest of adventures, making it a rule to do battle with any willing to encounter them; one champion in particular has a reputation for uniform success. Tristan changes his armor, and thus disguised, vanquishes the adversary, whose steed he bestows on a poor man; the cavalier returns to court, where he recounts his misfortune. Hence curiosity as to the victor; Walwain suspects Tristan, who, when adjured in Isolt's name, cannot choose but confess the truth. Walwain is of opinion that Tristan ought to be rewarded, and persuades Arthur to arrange a hunt in the Blanche Lande (on the marches of Cornwall), where the king has a hunting-lodge. In pursuing a stag, it is contrived that the chase shall be directed toward Tintagel; when night falls, a lodging is asked for. Since Marc is known to detest his nephew, the seneschal is sent to obtain an assurance of safety. The story in some measure follows the lines of the chamber scene in the first part; Tristan is wounded, and in order to avoid detection, Kay suggests that the knights of the Round Table put themselves in a similar condition (incident of the scythes).

A corresponding trait occurs in the Prose, and may be taken to indicate that the episode was not Eilhart's own addition to the story; that the action is in substance of the early period is made likely by the character of the seneschal,

XII. ARTHURIAN EPISODE

who figures as friend and deliverer of the hero, whereas from the time of Crestien, Kay is described as being sharp-tongued and malicious.

The Berol fragment concludes with a different Arthurian adventure. After the restoration of the queen, Cornish lords insist that she justify herself by legal process; this she is willing to do, provided that the ceremony take place before Arthur, who for this purpose visits the Blanche Lande. With the aid of Tristran, who remains in the vicinity, is devised a form of oath which can be taken without absolute perjury.

As already noted, Thomas also introduces an ordeal, in which the hero plays a similar part; the agreement of such intercalations implies that the respective authors borrowed from some common informant. Again, the mention, in both Thomas and Berol, of the locality Blanche Lande implies that this informant, on his own part, had constructed the episode after the guidance of that same Arthurian adventure which we have in Eilhart. The two poets, therefore, derived their suggestion from some lost romancer of the latter half of the twelfth century, who was himself a decorator of the "Original" translated by Eilhart.

That Thomas omits to make mention of Arthur is sufficiently explained by his chronological scheme; having made the king of Cornwall a conqueror of England, he could not refer the story to Arthurian time.

XIII. MARRIAGE

After the hunting party, Tristran leaves Arthur, makes a week's journey, and finally arrives in a wasted country, through which he rides for three days, seeing only deserted towns and villages. At last he finds a hermit, from whom he learns that the king has been attacked by his vassal the Count of Nantes, to whom he had refused the hand of a daughter, and having been defeated, is now besieged in his last stronghold of Carahes (Carhaix in Brittany). The hero rides to the gate, offers his services, and recites his quality. Out of delicacy the king refuses; want of provisions forbids the proper entertainment of a guest. At the intercession of the king's son the scruple is waived, and the two young knights swear friendship; Tristran is conducted to the presence of the princess, and is surprised to hear her called Isolt; the name awakens tender associations. The Count daily challenges single combat. Having obtained consent to try his fortune, Tristran vanquishes and captures the assailant, who is compelled to provision the fort. The Count's men demand his liberation, otherwise threatening to storm the town and put all to the sword. Nephews of the king arrive by sea, with reinforcements; it is resolved to accept battle in the open field, and the command is given to Tristran, who makes proper dispositions. The two nephews are separately posted as reserves, while the king, with knights, archers and variously armed burghers, is stationed at the gates; Tristran

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himself, with a force of cavalry, is to surprise the camp of the enemy. The attack is successfully effected, but, as the hero had foreseen, it proves necessary to call up the reserves; a desperate battle is finally decided by the appearance, at the critical moment, of the king with the citizens. The siege is abandoned, and all honor paid to Tristran, who, through his comrade, is offered the hand of Isolt; the marriage takes place, but is not consummated.

This adventure has particular interest, because it has been imitated by Crestien, who on this basis recounts the marriage of Perceval. Romantizations are introduced; Blanche-flor is made a queen in her own right. It thus becomes clear that, when Crestien wrote his last work, the tale which we possess through Eilhart was still the accepted form of the *Tristran*.

After his habit, Thomas subjects the narrative to a complete reconstruction. In time of war the hero enters the service of the Duke of Brittany, and obtains the independent command of a fortress. Into a song which he is in the habit of chanting, he introduces a refrain expressing devotion to Isolt; by a natural mistake, he is supposed to entertain an attachment for the daughter of the house, and the marriage follows. To my mind, the account, compared with that just mentioned, indicates the continued process of romantization, and proves that Thomas could not have written until after Crestien's time.

XIV. STOLEN INTERVIEWS

At great length the tale now sets forth successive journeys to Cornwall; of these four are enumerated.

I. Tristran's companion learns that his sister is neglected, and remonstrates. The hero replies, that he is loved by a lady who cares more for a hound than his wife does for himself, and in order to prove the truth of the assertion, proposes a voyage. The two cross the sea, and through the friendly seneschal of Marc, it is arranged that the king and queen shall hunt in the Blanche Lande. Hidden in the bush, the travellers observe the passage of the train; Tristran's brother-in-law admires the queen's beauty, observes the manner in which she pets the dog whom the hero had confided to her care, and admits that his friend has only told the truth. On pretext of illness, Isolt contrives to separate herself from her husband, and receives Tristran, whose comrade has an amour with a bower-maiden. On his return, Tristran is pursued by a Cornish lord, who presses him hard, and finally adjures him to halt for the queen's honor; this Tristran, not having his charger and being unable to joust, declines to do. The lord informs Isolt, who is enraged by the unchivalric conduct of her lover. In vain her chamberlain is charged with excuses; the hero, in order to obtain an interview, assumes the disguise of a leper, but the merciless queen orders her servants to drive him away with blows. On his part incensed, Tristran promises his friend not to visit Cornwall for a year, returns to Brittany, and lives contentedly with his wife.

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II. As time passes, the queen regrets her harshness. She sends her page over sea, with a message imploring forgiveness; as penance she has donned a hair shirt. When the year is ended, Tristran and Governal, disguised as pilgrims, resort to Cornwall, and another meeting takes place in the Blanche Lande. Tristran now has an opportunity of making up for his former omission; when invited to take part in games for the queen's sake, he does so and distinguishes himself.

III. The father of the hero dies, and his kingdom is in confusion. Tristran proposes to bestow the realm on his tutor, and to take Cornwall on his way; the two assume the dress of minstrels. A meeting with the queen is arranged to take place at the fountain in the garden of Tintagel. The companions are pursued, but escape through a stratagem devised by the queen. Tristran reaches Lothian, where he remains two years.

At this point is brought in the introduction of a subsequent adventure. Tristran's brother loves a lady whom he should have married, but who has been wedded to a jealous dwarf by whom she is immured; false keys are obtained to her prison.

IV. In fresh wars with the Count of Nantes, Tristran, while attempting to storm a castle and bare-headed, is struck by a stone, and long lies helpless. On recovery, accompanied by a young nephew, he sits on the seashore, gazing toward Cornwall. The boy learns the cause of his wist-

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fulness, and assures him that his changed appearance will preclude recognition. As an idiot (and therefore merry-maker) he arrives in Cornwall, where he holds a riddling conversation with the king, and makes himself known to the queen, who causes him to be lodged below the stair of her bower. He is suspected by chamberlains, who surround him and attempt his arrest, but he breaks through, first taking leave of Isolt, whom he entreats to comply with any wishes expressed by a messenger who may present her ring as token.

Of the four journeys, Thomas relates only the first and second; but notes also the story of the jealous dwarf; the Prose also mentions the hero's hurt and illness; so that these authors were acquainted with the history which we have in Eilhart.

The adventure in which Tristran plays the part of a fool was found especially amusing, and received episodic treatment from writers of two lays, who expanded the data of the epos.

The attempted arrest in the queen's bower served the author of *Mort Artur* as a model for the scene in which Lancelot for the last time meets Guenievre.

It thus clearly appears that a single highly complicated narrative, the same which by good fortune Eilhart undertook to translate, is responsible for all extant versions of the romance.

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Tristran and his brother-in-arms secretly visit the dwarf's wife, are discovered and pursued; the brother is slain, and

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Tristan wounded with a poisoned lance; only Isolt of Cornwall can heal the wound. As messenger is sent a mariner of Carhaix, in whose house Tristan had once lodged; if the queen arrive a white sail is to be hoisted; the sailor's daughter is to keep watch. Tristan's wife learns the plan, and in her jealousy falsely reports that the sail is black; the hero dies of heart-break. On landing, the queen hears the tolling of church-bells, and meets the funeral procession; she disputes with her namesake a place at the head of the bier, lifts the linen shroud, flings herself on the body and expires. When the story is known, and he learns that the passion has been magically caused, Marc is sorry; he would rather have abandoned his realm than lost wife and nephew. He lays the lovers in one grave, and over their remains plants a vine and a rosebush, which rise and intertwine.

Eilhart adds, as a remark of his own, that the story was told in various ways; he had heard that the twining of the plants was owing to the power of the love-drink. The Prose also notes the king's repentance and the honorable interment at Tintagel, so that the secondary source must have retained these traits.

Thomas, though retaining the outlines of the death-scene, has been pleased to recast the manner of the hero's injury, which according to him was received from an envenomed spear wielded by the men of The Proud One of the Iron Castle, against whom Tristan has espoused the cause of a dwarfish namesake. The poet says that he had read a

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version in which the wounder was a dwarf whose wife the hero's brother-in-law loved; but this variant contained an impossibility, in affirming that it was Govenal who brought over Isolt; now the latter was too well known in Britain safely to visit the island.

The version of the Prose, which makes mention of the white sail, agrees with Eilhart in making Tristran's friend the mariner fetch the queen.

Thomas adds that the narrators to whom he objects had not been acquainted with the story of Breri, who was an authority in regard to the *gesta* of British kings and counts. In such expression, the poet follows a common practice; a minstrel who thought the minds of his readers preoccupied with that earlier form of a history which he chose to recast, would be likely to affirm that his predecessor (whom he used and altered) was imperfectly informed.

As to Breri, it so happens that Giraldus Cambrensis mentions as a famous *fabulator* of an earlier generation a Bledhericus; this personage may be identical with the Breri noted by Thomas. The equation suggests intricate questions, which might well find consideration in the course of an inquiry into the "Matter of Britain." However, in the present case, the name is introduced only as that of a fabulous sponsor. The notice, therefore, is not directly relevant, and the question as to Cymric sources must be otherwise determined.

XVI. RELATION OF VERSIONS

That all extant forms of the tale go back to a single French original, and that such original is in the main represented by Eilhart's translation, are positions established by Bédier.

I go a step farther, and consider the poem of Eilhart as a rude but faithful paraphrase, in its entirety, of the assumed original.

The fragment of Berol, so far as coincident, is an enlarged and decorated recast of the same composition.

The extent to which Crestien, in his preserved poems, has laid under contribution themes correspondent to Eilhart's narration leaves room for only two conclusions: Eilhart translated, either the lost *Tristan* of Crestien, or else an earlier romance which the latter remodelled.

Remaining versions (*Thomas*, the *Prose*, *Tristan* as *Fool*), by their agreements, indicate a common secondary source, in which the history was advanced one stage beyond that of Eilhart's narrative. Now, the relation of Crestien to prose Arthurian romance makes it altogether probable that his was the required intermediary followed; so that of the alternatives already presented, the latter is to be preferred; Crestien reconstructed the poem, which, by good fortune, is preserved through Eilhart's rough paraphrase.

In any attempt to trace farther back the development of the tale, the inquirer has no resource other than conjecture based on the data of the German poem.

XVII. THE HISTORY IN WALES

In mediæval Welsh literature the story exists only in the form of allusions.

The tale of *Kulhwch and Olwen*, in reciting the names of ladies belonging to the court of Arthur, mentions Essylt Vinwen and Essylt Vingul. In *The Dream of Rhonabwy* Drystan figures as a knight of Arthur.

Triads note the same names. Essylt is described as an unchaste lady, and Drystan or Trystan as a brave warrior.

A single triad gives more definite statements. Desiring to communicate with Essylt, wife of his uncle March, son of Meirchion, Trystan commissions a swineherd to carry his message, and during the interim undertakes to watch the drove; Arthur, March, Kei, and Bedwyr endeavor to obtain a pig, but cannot succeed either by force or guile.

Scanty as is the information, it implies that mediæval Welshmen were acquainted with the hero's banishment from the court of Cornwall, his secret meetings with the wife of his uncle, and his subsequent marriage to a second heroine of like name; in other words, with the outline of a tale similar to that of the romancers.

The relation might very well be interpreted on the supposition that Welsh literati borrowed from French romance the data which they afterwards expanded in their own manner.

Manuscripts of the sixteenth century contain an elaborate tale, which, as only recently (and not yet completely)

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edited, has escaped the attention of comparative students. The writers, who seem to have been chiefly concerned with the preservation of verse, have only given a prose account necessary for comprehension of the poetry; the notices seem to be in the nature of abstracts, and to imply a long history. So far as the obscurities of bad spelling and bardic mysticism allow me to decipher, the purport appears to be somewhat as follows.

Trystan and Essylt elope from the court of March into the wood of Celyddon (the Caledonian Forest), where the trees of the wilderness supply couch and food. They have also taken the wise precaution to convey a hamper containing pasties and wine. Essylt is accompanied by a maiden, called Eye-of-a-Summer-Day. Essylt is in terror for the sake of Trystan, who has disappeared in the dangerous forest, which is full of alarming sounds. Kae Hir (Kay the Long) finds her in this state of mind, and consoles her with good news of the hero's safety; as a reward, he is promised possession of the maid with the summery appellation. The King of Cornwall carries to Arthur (who is a near relation of both parties, being uncle to Trystan) report of his domestic infelicity, and complaints against his nephew; Arthur, it seems, wishes to summon Trystan, but the latter is recalcitrant, and (as indicated in another version) overthrows in joust knights of the Round Table who have gone in quest of him. Arthur causes minstrels to play before

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the wanderer, with intent to charm away his fury. Gwalchmai (Gawain), using his accustomed courtesy, soothes Trystran and brings the latter to the king. Arthur endeavors to effect a reconciliation; but inasmuch as neither the husband nor the lover is willing to forego Essylt's society, there is nothing to do but for her to divide the year between the rivals. March, offered his choice of the leafy or leafless season, prefers the latter as longer in duration. The narrative is interspersed with *englynion* or verses, which present the accustomed combination of mystery and meaninglessness. (*Report on MSS. in the Welsh Language, Hist. MSS. Commission*, London, 1902, II, 105.)

The French Prose makes the lovers retire to the forest of Morois, where the wood furnishes their food, while Governal also brings provision from a neighboring castle; in this tale also the queen is accompanied by a maiden (who seems to be a relative of Brengain). Marc recaptures Isolt, and eventually also Tristran, who swears to forsake Cornwall, and resorts to Logres (England); he distinguishes himself in a tournament, disappears, and is the object of a quest; he is brought to court by Lancelot, and made a knight of the Round Table; Marc also resorts to Arthur, who effects a temporary reconciliation, and uncle and nephew together return to Cornwall.

It appears probable that the Welsh tale represents a free construction after hints supplied by the French Prose.

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In that portion of the Berol-fragment coincident with Eilhart, persons represented are named as follows:

Marc, king of Cornwall.
Tristran of Leonois, nephew of Marc.
Audret of Nicole, nephew of Marc.
Dinas of Dinan, seneschal of Marc.
Governal, tutor of Tristran.
Perinis, chamberlain of the queen.
Ogrin, a hermit, confessor of Marc.
Frocin, a dwarf.
Ivain, a leper.

Isolt of Ireland, wife of Marc.
Bregain, governess of Isolt.

Marc. The name is the Latin Marcus. The Latin life of Saint Paulus Aurelianus (written in the ninth century) mentions a British king Marcus (of the seventh century), otherwise called Quonomorius, and said to have reigned over peoples speaking four languages. The affiliations of the author make it likely that this king was a Welshman; as Bédier suggests, the name is too common to require an equation of this Marcus with the sovereign of the romance.

Tristran. Eilhart has Tristrant, the MSS. of the French poems usually Tristran; but remains of a form Tristrant,

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preserved in rhyme, are sufficiently numerous to indicate (as seems to me) the originality of the final *t*. (It is true that in the Prose numerous proper names end either in the terminations *-an* or *-ant*, without any certainty as to the spelling which ought to be preferred; but these appellations are only quasi-Celtic, being merely free inventions after the model of Tristrant or Tristran.) Tristram found in French, Norse, and English, is only an euphonization; the reduction Tristan seems scarcely to have established itself earlier than the thirteenth century (Gottfried's is perhaps the first clear evidence).

The Pictish Chronicle and also Irish Annals know of Pictish kings called Drust, Drest, Drost, or (with diminutive ending) Drostan. Another royal Pictish name is Talorc, Talargan; this and the former interchange as belonging to father and son. A Talargan, son of Fergus, was slain at the battle of Mugdock in 750; the name, without change of spelling, appears in *Annales Cambriae*.

The Welsh name is Drystan or Trystan (the latter form having at least equal title to precedence) son of Tallwch.

Now, by reason of the double assonance, it is held that the son of Tallwch is to be identified with a Drostan son of Talorc, and so must be set down as originally a Pict. Yet, if the coincidence is twofold, so is the variation. There is no phonetic reason for altering the former to the latter; why should Welsh scholars, familiar with the Pictish orthography,

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be at the trouble to effect a change? So much, even if the hero had in the first instance been called Tristan; but since his French name was Tristrant or Tristran, the equation falls by its own weight. Probably the coincidence is altogether accidental; if any one thinks the resemblance requires explanation, he is at liberty to suppose that the author, who, after the manner of Welsh narrators, saw fit to confer on an immigrant hero papers of naturalization in the form of Celtic paternity, allowed his fancy to be jogged by a vague reminiscence of names read in chronicles.

The romancers thought the appellation significant, and it seems to me likely that such may originally have been the case. The babe is called Tristrant, or Maker of Grief, as having brought about the death of his mother. A parallel is offered by *Amis and Amiloun*, in which the youth Owein receives the surname Amorant (or Amoraunt, Enamorer), by which he is henceforth addressed. On the basis of this example, it may be guessed that in an earlier stage of the tale the hero possessed a separate proper name, which in the extant history has been superseded by an epithetic designation. Such process is common. So in the poem of Thomas, Tristran's father was called by the epithet Canelengres, in place of Rivalen. In the Welsh tale entitled *Pwyll Prince of Dyfed*, Gwri Wallt Eurn (Gwri of the Golden Locks) obtains from his mother the surname Pryderi, or Anxiety, on account of the distress caused to his friends by his disappear-

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ance. In the Irish narrative called *Cath Mucrama*, Fiachna Muillethan (Broad-Crown) receives the nickname *Fer dá Liach*, or Man-of-two-Griefs, as having lost his father on the day of his begetting and his mother on that of his birth.

Governal might come from governor, as suitable to the quality of an ideal Mentor; but *Folie Tristan* and Eilhart have a metathetic *Gorvenal*.

Frocin or *Frocine* might be connected with *froncin*, parchment (from the wrinkled aspect of dwarfs).

Isolt. Golther long ago pointed out that, previous to the century of the romance, the name was a Germanic designation, masculine and also feminine.

In Eilhart and Berol neither Isolt has an epithet which forms part of the proper name; but Crestien mentions Isolt of Ireland as *la bloie* (the blond), which is also used in *Folie Tristan*, while Isolt of Brittany in the versions of the later type is regularly called the White-handed.

Mention has already been made of the Welsh heroines, Essylt Vinwen and Essylt Vingul. The first epithet should be made up of *min*, lip, and *gwen*, white, the second of *min* and *cul*, narrow. But what signify the qualifications white-lipped and narrow-lipped? The sense is the reverse of clear. I suppose that the appellations are bardic and purposely obscure. Perhaps the intention is moral rather than physical: the queen of Cornwall may be referred to as a sincere lover, the lady of Brittany as limited or mean (with

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allusion to her untruthfulness in the matter of the white sail which wafted her rival). However this may be, the adherence of significant epithets to the name proper, in contrast to the direct simplicity of the older French version, clearly indicates a later stage of development. The inference is that it was rather in the thirteenth century than the twelfth, on the basis of the later rather than the earlier French tale, that the history was admitted to Wales. This conclusion agrees with the abbreviated name of the hero (Tristan instead of Tristran).

Brengain (Bringvain, Thomas) is doubtless the name which we have in the Welsh tale of Branwen daughter of Llyr.

Rivalen (Rivalin, Eilhart). The father of the hero has a very familiar Cymric proper name, Rhiwallon, Latinized Rivallo, etc. Thomas gives him the surname Canelengres, which in his story often replaces Rivalen. He seems to suppose that the addition has to do with an aerial place-name Canoele. I would rather suppose that originally the appendage contained a significant French epithet (*li-engres*).

Hudent (Utant, Eilhart). The name of the hound should have something to do with that habit of baying on the trail, which forms his characteristic office in the narrative. Perhaps *Hu-dent*, Howl-tooth, *i.e.* Loud-mouth?

Other proper names of the older version are nondescript or uncertain as to derivation.

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In an episode inserted by Berol the enemies of Tristran are named as Guenelon (the traitor of the Song of Roland), Godoine (English Godwin), and Denoalent, etc. a name which has been identified with a Donuallonus of the Car-tulary of Redon (Brittany).

Thomas supplies many more actors, in the main representative only of his own imaginative faculty. It is of interest to note the methods he employs.

(1) Duplication of names already belonging to the tale: Isolt queen of Ireland, mother of the heroine.

(2) Addition of an epithet as part of a name: Tristran *li amerus* (the lover) in contrast with a Tristran *li nain* (the dwarf).

(3) Substitution of more euphonious and quasi-Celtic appellations: Melot for the dwarf Frocin, Mariadok (saga: *i.e.* Meriadoc) for Audret, Cariado (*i.e.* Caradoc) for Pleherin.

(4) Introduction of actors quasi-Celtic or connected with British history: Morgan Duke of Brittany, Gormon king of Ireland (this name borrowed from Geoffrey of Monmouth through Wace).

The manner of procedure thus illustrated deserves attention. Recent inquirers have been prone to lay emphasis on the character of proper names; Celtic resonance, to their minds, supposes Celtic derivation. They overlook the es-

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sential consideration that mediæval romancers, like modern novelists, found no difficulty in adapting names to scenery; if the action were laid in Celtic lands, the appellations naturally took on a Celtic quality. Such observation amply accounts for the Celticizing names of the earlier story (Rivalen, Brengain).

XIX. LOCALITIES

All narrators make Cornwall the country of the husband, Ireland the birth-land of the first Isolt, and Brittany the country of the second.

The hero, in most versions, belongs to Loonois or Leonois, that is to say Lodonesia, or Lothian in Scotland. Thomas has seen fit to alter the residence, which (on the evidence of translators) he seems to have called Ermenie. According to Beda, Britons came from Armorica; a scribe miswrote Armenia, whence probably Thomas took his idea; Tristran, as representing the original habitat of the race, was more British than the Britons.

Marie, on the contrary, makes Tristran a native of South Wales; as she is likely to have been well informed, it must be presumed that she was acquainted with a form of the history different from that which lies at the basis of all extant versions; since she knew the exile of Tristran, his secret visits to the queen of his uncle, and the simultaneous

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death of the lovers, the story must have been kindred, and depended on the same ultimate source; and since her poem is the oldest existing work of the cycle, it follows that when she wrote, the type of the tale given in Eilhart had not yet been firmly established.

Geographical indications are slender. Romancers know that Nantes and Carhaix were towns of Brittany. Eilhart makes Tintagel the residence of Marc, while Berol (obviously by later expansion) considers this town to be only one among many royal cities; mentioned especially are the (aerial) localities of Lancien and Saint Lubin (the latter name is found in Normandy, to which country Berol has been referred).

Other Cornish localities are fanciful. Morois is described as a wood near Tintagel, and cannot (as has been thought) relate to Moray; Blanche Lande is a district on the border of England, and can have no relation to any known historical locality of like name; the isle of the duel was in full view of warriors standing on the Cornish shore, and cannot have been any *Insula Trestanni* (Trestan's Isle) of the Scilly Islands.

Eilhart and Berol know of no designation for the island in question, which Crestien and later writers call the Isle of Saint Samson. Substitution of a definite name for an anonymous locality is a mark of a later variant. The mention may be taken with the epithet attached to the name of

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the heroine as evidence confirming the conjecture that by Crestien the story was advanced a stage beyond that found in Eilhart.

Berol's affirmation that Cornishmen call a certain precipice Tristan's Leap is not to be taken seriously.

In the usual Anglo-Norman style, Wales figures as a desert to which exiles fly, and as an abode of rude folk.

Arthur's country (Britain, according to Eilhart) is exclusive of Cornwall and Lothian, Marc and Rivalen being independent princes. In accordance with Arthurian romance, Carlisle is mentioned as a principal city. Thomas, in order to aggrandize the king of Cornwall, has been pleased to relegate the history to some unspecified age.

XX. TALE ELEMENTS

The romance has been developed with the aid of subordinate themes, which for the most part appear elsewhere in French literature, and must be considered as West European rather than as belonging to any particular country.

A celebrated passage of Berol assigns to the King of Cornwall the ears of a horse. The attribution is dependent on the resemblance of the Old French *marc*, horse (Welsh *march*) to the proper name Marc. It has been thought that the trait may imply the survival of old Celtic myth.

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However, the incident constitutes one of the numerous intercalations which appear solely in Berol, and which cannot be supposed to have had any place in the original romance; the scene is introduced in order to satisfy poetic justice, by bringing to a bad end enemies of the hero. Moreover, as Bédier points out, there was another tale in which the dwarf perished, not at the hands of the king, but by the agency of Tristan himself.

In fact, Berol merely took up into his decorated narrative a current anecdote, which in the Middle Age was familiar throughout Europe and Asia.

A king is said to have had monstrous ears (of a goat, ass, or horse); in order to hide this defect, he is in the habit of murdering his barbers. It so happens that on a certain day the office is of necessity performed by a friend, who is spared on condition of secrecy. The effort at concealment proves too much for his health, and a physician recommends him to relieve his mind by imparting the secret to the earth. A hole is dug, the tidings whispered, and the spot covered over. Reeds spring up, of which minstrels make pipes. These play only one tune, reciting that the king has such ears.

The tale is related with variations by Ovid, appears as the twenty-second narration of the Mongol Siddhi-Kür, and has been recorded in Servia, Ireland (*Revue Celtique*, ii, 197), Brittany (Cambry, *Voyage dans le Finistère*, Brest,

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1835, p. 179), and Wales (J. Rhys, *Celtic Folk-lore*, Oxford, 1901, i, 233).

It may excite surprise that a poet of the thirteenth century should have been willing to give a king such appendages. This, however, I believe, Berol does not do. Marc, suspicious of his nephew, has frequent occasion to consult the divining dwarf, whom curious lords besiege for information. He declares, that if they will put his head under a thorn-bush, they shall know. This is done, and the dwarf affirms that the bush, not he, says that the king has horse's ears. The lords inform Marc, who laughs, and replies that if he has such ears, it is the diviner who has put them on him; with the accustomed arbitrary procedure of kings in fable, he takes the head of the dwarf, not for his babbling (the king's ears are perfectly normal), but for his impudence. The passage presupposes on the part of French readers a knowledge of the tale.

For the rest, it is an error, in my judgment, to look for any peculiarly Norse, English, or Cymric character in episodes of the *Tristan*.

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Speaking generally, the scenario and properties of the tale, costume, behavior, address, armor, warfare, religion, belong only to French life in the middle of the twelfth cen-

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ture. There are, however, certain exceptional traits which have been taken to indicate survival from earlier barbarism, and to imply that the romancers received information from Cymric sources.

Among such traits Bédier notes the following: skill in archery of the hero, the possession of a miraculous bow, the mention of Tintagel as a castle disappearing semi-annually, and the gift ascribed to Tristan of imitating the notes of birds.

It is to be noted, in the first place, that these mentions are only additions made by Berol or other late authors, whose intercalations usually represent only their own fancy.

Again, it is not to be forgotten that France and England overflowed with fairy lore, from which suggestions might readily be obtained.

The poet who chooses to make Tristan imitate the night-ingle has for his object the conveying of a signal to a lady; surely the idea implies a sophisticated author. For Norman archery, one need only remember Wat Tyrrel.

More definite are indications contained in the accounts of habitation. Desiring to communicate with the heroine, Tristan sends carved sticks down a stream which flows through her bower, where they may be observed and convey their message. Now it is held that such description implies domestic arrangements incompatible with civilized life.

In general, the romancers make the surroundings of the

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Cornish court as splendid as they know how. The palace is within the walls of Tintagel, where it has a conspicuous position. It is provided with a hall in an upper story or approached by steps, according to the custom of such baronial edifices. On the ground floor are marble chambers, offering opportunities for carousal which the exile Tristran remembers and regrets. The women's apartment—the "chamber" (German *kemenate*) or "chambers" (Berol)—forms a separate building with its own entrance, having a stair which is especially mentioned. Here (presumably in the upper story) is the bedchamber proper, served, according to usage, by chamberlains who were liable at any time to be needed, and who therefore slept in the room (the office of Lord of the Bedchamber, still retained in the English court, indicates the Anglo-Norman character of the account); Tristran seems to have held this office. The "chamber" contains also other rooms suitable for the accommodation of the queen and her ladies; on the ground floor is especially mentioned a room provided with curtained windows and a dais, in which (according to Berol) the queen receives Tristran.

Adjacent to the palace is an extensive garden, in the centre of which flows a fountain, provided with a basin of marble; here the queen makes an assignation, and her husband conceals himself in an overhanging pine-tree. The stream runs through the garden, and is conducted under the

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“chamber,” doubtless in order to supply the cisterns and sinks of the basement. What is there here which can properly be designated as primitive? Indeed, Bédier points out a complete parallel, in which the poem of *Robert le Diable* makes a stream similarly flow through the bower of an emperor’s daughter.

That such a method of obtaining a water supply was European may further be shown by an example from Franconia. Wolfram of Eschenbach makes a brook run through the cloister of Sigune (the passage is of his own invention).

Examples of similar arrangements which have been cited from Celtic countries (by Kuno Meyer) can therefore be taken only as additional instances of an international habit.

Altogether different is the character of another scene found in Eilhart. When the knights of Arthur are received at Tintagel, not only are the guests lodged in the hall, but also the queen has in the same room her bed, which is protected by scythes.

This mode of lodging is certainly primitive enough, but also directly in contravention of that above noticed; what has become of the “chamber”? Since prehistoric time, no Cymric princes ever so dwelt. The passage belongs to the second and later part of the poem. The apology, given by Eilhart, in which he observes that ancient kings did not have houses as extensive as at present, probably made part

XXI. MANNERS

of his source. The whole trait I take to be merely a piece of deliberate and awkward archaism on the part of the French continuator.

XXII. ETHICS

That love has a right to make its own law is a doctrine familiar in modern fiction. It is held, however, that in order to play a part worthy of artistic representation, lovers must hoist their own independent flag, rather than piratically cruise under the accepted standard of conventional propriety.

With the *Tristan* it is different; the wife is the queen of a mighty kingdom, her lover its heir apparent; neither has the least idea of forfeiting so advantageous a position in order to enjoy each other in safe but obscure retirement. The problem is how to obtain pleasure without losing position; for no better purpose it is considered praiseworthy to flatter and deceive; merely in order to keep her secret unshared, the heroine stoops to plot the murder of a faithful friend and benefactress, whose honor she has already sacrificed.

On freedoms of lovers the saints smile, unless when it becomes a question of judicial procedure; then indeed, for the sake of his own reputation as official enforcer of oaths,

XXII. ETHICS

the saint will be implacable; it is only necessary, however, to devise some form of words, which may be sufficient to attest a falsehood, yet not literally false.

Such conceptions appear to me in no degree peculiar, but quite in conformity with courtly habit. Ancient epos would probably have required a more daring procedure; at least, in old Irish saga, the lady in similar cases exercises her right of demanding to be carried off.

XXIII. PERIOD

The lay of Marie, the earlier extant document of the cycle, may be dated about 1160. As has been observed, the tale known to her seems not to have been the existing history, with which, a few years later, we find Crestien acquainted.

On the basis of its rude vigor, the *Tristan* has been supposed by Bédier to represent an Anglo-Norman poem of about 1120.

For a more definite conclusion, I would refer to Geoffrey of Monmouth. The narrative presents kings of Cornwall and Lothian as independent of Arthur; such an account would have been impossible after Geoffrey had made the Briton the greatest of emperors. On the other hand, Eilhart's story introduces developed Arthurian romance, and in so far may be considered as posterior to *Historia*

XXIII. PERIOD

Regum Britanniae. Correspondingly, the narrative contains indications that the first part was prior, and the second part a sequel. We have to do, therefore, with a poem of the reign of Henry I, continued and recast in the reign of Stephen.

The work of Thomas I would date as subsequent to Crestien's activity (not earlier than 1180).

The edition of Berol is known, through an allusion, to have been compiled in the first years of the thirteenth century.

XXIV. THEORY

In early Anglo-Norman time may have existed an anecdote (of any country or no particular country), expounding the disastrous effects of a mistakenly administered marriage philter. On this foundation, by stages no longer apparent, was produced, before 1136, an episodic poem in substance presenting the first half of the extant history. After the manner of such imperfect organisms (compare the consequences of Crestien's *Lancelot*) the romance, after 1136, created its own new conclusion, and set up an independent existence. The narrative immediately began to vary; one version was familiar to Marie, another, probably produced a little later, has served as basis for all existing forms of the story, and on this account may be called the

XXIV. THEORY

"Original"; this was known to Crestien (less probably was his own lost poem), has been faithfully paraphrased by Eilhart, and utilized by Berol. Not the Original, but a romanticized recast (possibly Crestien's) served as basis for later versions, Thomas, the Lays, and the Prose. Founded on the same Original were many biographies and episodes not now preserved; situations from such lost literature have been introduced by Thomas and Berol. The development continued in the Prose, which in the first instance may have had a form more lucid than the present chaotic reconstructions; hence Welsh authors may have borrowed the story, which in Wales henceforth pursued its own independent career.

XXV. MODERN VERSE

Writers of verse have taken the story, either (like Wagner) from Thomas after the translation of Gottfried, or (as English poets have done) from the Prose through the epitome of Malory.

The romance essentially represents the courtly custom of the Middle Age (and also of modern times), in which marriage has been regarded, not as the end, but the beginning of love-making. With the ethics English authors have found themselves embarrassed: Tennyson failed to make the history poetic; Arnold took refuge in describing the

XXV. MODERN VERSE

virtues of the wife of the hero; Swinburne frankly accepted mediæval ideas, even to the extent of finding room for one at least of the crimes by which the account is stained.

Wagner, with the marvellous resources of a new art, produced a creation in some measure purified by its beauty; yet he felt the necessity of according the ethics to spiritual perceptions through the medium of a mystic philosophy, which not many hearers of the music find it necessary to take into account.

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